



# MONTANA FISH AND WILDLIFE COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM COVER SHEET

THE **OUTSIDE** IS IN US ALL.

**Meeting Date:** August 20, 2021

**Agenda Item:** Trapping Setbacks

**Action Needed:** Final

**Time Needed on Agenda for this Presentation:** 60 minutes

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**Background:** In October 2019, the commission directed the department to review the need for additional expanded setback areas in each region in response to feedback from the Montana's Trapping Advisory Committee. Although public involvement was challenged by the covid pandemic, the department committed to completing the task by summer 2021. The objective was to update trapping setbacks to be effective and consistent with current public land uses, both in areas where dog-related recreation has increased and in areas where setbacks are not needed because there has been little to no dog-related recreational use.

The department is recommending five areas in Region 1 and one in Region 3 for an expanded setback for trapping, one area in Region 1 for elimination of setbacks for trapping, and 12 locations for restricting trapping altogether. The other five regions are not recommending any changes to setbacks or trapping areas. Region 2 already has several previously adjusted setback areas.

**Public Involvement Process and Results:** Some proposals were solicited during the 2020 commission process. Regions reached out to stakeholders during late 2020 through May 2021 to identify and consider any needed changes. Public land managers were contacted due to their familiarity with recreational use on public lands. Trappers were contacted for input. Recreational stakeholders were also contacted. The result of these communications is a proposal to designate five road or trails as requiring expanded 500-foot setbacks in Region 1, four large areas that would require no setbacks, and 12 small areas designated as no trapping areas; one trail in Region 3 is recommended to have a 500-foot setback. The department is proposing no changes in any other regions.

**Alternatives and Analysis:** Dog captures in traps are infrequent (25/year, most of which are released uninjured) and an exception (1/70,000 trap-nights), but it can be a sensitive issue that can damage the perception of trapping. Establishing a set of rules that eliminates all conflict is difficult. The proposed changes should reduce conflict in higher recreational use areas and open more areas for trapping where conflict is expected to be limited.

**Agency Rationale and Recommendation:** The department supports the adoption of the proposed changes to setbacks for public comment.

**Proposed Motion:**

I move that the commission vote to adopt the proposed setbacks for trapping furbearers and wolf as presented by the department.